

This Old Man

English Folk Song

1. This old man, he played one, He played nick - nack on my drum.
2. This old man, he played two, He played nick - nack on my shoe.

Nick - nack pad - dy - whack, give the dog a bone. This old man came roll - ing home.

3. . . .three, He played nick-nack on my tree.
4. . . .four, He played nick-nack on my door.
5. . . .five, He played nick-nack on my hive.
6. . . .six, He played nick-nack on my sticks.
7. . . .seven, He played nick-nack on my oven.
8. . . .eight, He played nick-nack on my gate.
9. . . .nine, He played nick-nack on my line.
10. . . .ten, He played nick-nack on my hen.

SINGING

One of the benefits of this song is the multiple versions available in print, on recordings, and in children's literature. It's a standard in children's song literature. But for young people who have never heard it before it's a fascinating discovery. Start with the refrain since that is the captivating part of the song. When the children are secure with the refrain begin the task of learning the verses. Though there are ten verses they are learned easily because of the "counting" process and simple rhythm that are part of the song. Add actions if you know some.

PLAYING

Take time to secure the refrain rhythm in the children's understanding. Have them play the rhythm to "Nicknack paddywhack, give a dog a bone" several times by simply alternating hand pats on their laps. Extend the phrase by adding a two hand "pat, pat, clap, clap, roll, thumbs (roll hands around each other, end with thumbs over the shoulders) to create the complete musical phrase. When the children are confident with this pattern provide a pair of rhythm sticks for each student. Now play the same pattern with the sticks, like a drum, on the seat of their chair. Sing the song and every time the refrain occurs have the students play the rhythm sticks as accompaniment with their singing.

CREATE

Review the lyrics and decide how many of the objects on which the children are instructed to play "nicknack" are actually available in the classroom. It is doubtful that all of them would be present or intact. Apply some creative problem solving to the situation by discovering or making alternative "nicknack" objects. If necessary, change the verses to match the rhyme pattern of the numbers. Once ten "nicknack" objects are in place, have the children move around the room and play their rhythm sticks on the appropriate objects as they count and sing the song.

LISTENING

Obtain two different versions of the song either in print or on recordings. (Look for "The King Singers" or "Bob Dylan" arrangements of the song if using recordings.) If using print, be prepared to sing or read the versions so that the children will be called upon to respond aurally. Have the children listen to the different versions and identify the variations they hear in the song. The variations could be musical (different voices, style, accompaniment) or literary (different lyrics). Have the children identify and describe what they think they heard in the music.

INTEGRATION (Math)

"This Old Man" is a young children's number song sequenced from 1 to 10. Play with the numbers by having the children do the song backwards from 10 to 1. Or have them sing only the even numbered verses of the song one time and the odd numbered verses the next time through. This provides an enjoyable way to secure their numbers understanding.

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